

Madigan Army Medical Center gets new commander

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With the passing of the colors, Madigan Army Medical Center gained a new commander and hospital sergeant major during a change of command ceremony at Watkins Field Aug. 13.

Maj. Gen. Patricia D. Horoho and Command Sgt. Maj. Billy R. King relinquished command and responsibility to Col. Jerome (Jerry) Penner III, and Sgt. Maj. Michael S. Kurtz during the event. Penner, recently the commander at Fort Drum, N.Y.'s U.S. Army Medical Department Activity, is now Madigan's 36th commander.

The ceremony was unique in that both Horoho and King are not actually losing their command titles; just one of their commands. Both Soldiers will now only be the command team for the Western Regional Medical Command, which is Madigan's higher headquarters. Horoho has commanded Madigan and the Western Region for 13 months, but also had two other hats: she is the chief of the Army Nurse Corps and the senior marketing executive for the TRICARE Puget Sound Multiservice Market.

During her tenure at Madigan, Horoho has accomplished many major feats for a one-year command:

- Confidential Alcohol Treatment and Education Pilot – a program that allows all Soldiers to confidentially self-refer themselves for alcohol-abuse treatment and counseling, and the standard commander notification requirements will be waived for those enrolled Soldiers.
- Madigan was named among the “100 Most Wired Hospitals and Health Systems” for the sixth time this year and the fourth consecutive year, marking the medical center as being an innovator in information technology for all hospitals nationwide in quality, customer service, public health and safety, business processes and workforce issues.
- MiCare – Madigan is leading the way in personal health record technology by establishing a Department of Defense pilot program to allow service members access to view and manage their health records online through a portal called MiCare.
- Horoho was named the 43rd annual military Woman of the Year by the USO earlier this year, for a female who has distinguished themselves through tireless commitment and dedication to service.

The change of command symbolizes the history and legacy of a unit. Madigan is one of the Army's most state-of-the-art and technically advanced medical centers. One of only three designated level two trauma centers in the U.S. Army Medical Command, Madigan's nearly 4,300 employees serve a population that schedules almost 1 million outpatient visits each year. Madigan's Anderson Simulation Center is one of less than 20

simulation centers across the country used to achieve American College of Surgeons Level 1 Certification. In addition, the Medical Simulation Training Center at Madigan prepares medical personnel to effectively handle real-world combat casualties through simulated training modules and simulated battlefield-type medical evacuations. To date, thousands of soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Federal agents have been trained at the MSTC.

Serving as the reviewing officer for the ceremony was Maj. Gen. David A. Rubenstein, the U.S. Army Medical Command deputy surgeon general. The U.S. Medical Army Command is the headquarters for all medical facilities and departments throughout the Army.

Rubenstein spoke about the difficulty military treatment facility commanders have in managing both their respective hospitals and a high operational tempo environment. "Executing this mission in an environment highlighted by support to combat operations a half a world away and the simultaneous transformation of the United States Army and the U.S. Army Medical Command makes the job all the more difficult and the accomplishments all the more impressive," Rubenstein said. "It's been a wildly successful 13 months of command."

Even though Horoho and King are stepping down as the command team of Madigan, they have a giant mission ahead of them in standing up the Western Regional Medical Command. Right now, the Western Region is comprised of three hospitals in six states: Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Idaho and Nevada. On Oct. 1, though, the region will expand to nine hospitals in 20 states, from Alaska to West Texas. "Madigan and the Western Regional Medical Command should be ideally positioned to focus (Horoho's) limitless energy on the growing mission of the regional medical command," Rubenstein said.

Assembled on the parade field to hear the outgoing commander speak one last time were Madigan Soldiers from Troop Command, the Warrior Transition Battalion, and the California Medical Detachment, from Monterrey, Calif. "I believe that the spirit of excellence has always been a part of Madigan's culture," Horoho said. "The pride that I will take away from serving with this team of professionals, from our housekeepers, volunteers, administrators, clinicians, contractors and to our leaders at all levels, is that as a collective force, we are all focused on doing one thing: meeting the needs of those we serve, serve with and serve for, and knowing that what we do at the point of patient care delivery has strategic implications."

Penner, 48, from Radcliff, Ky., was planning on retiring from the Army until he received a call from his friend Horoho asking if he would like to be the next commander of Madigan. It was an opportunity he couldn't turn down. "I'm certainly taking command of an outstanding organization like Madigan that represents the pinnacle of anyone's career and I'm truly humbled by this opportunity," Penner said during the event. In two years at Fort Drum, he increased on-post behavioral health care providers from 34 in 2007 to more than 60 in 2009, created the off-post Fort Drum/Samaritan Medical Center Clinic,

and secured funding for the Medical Activity's clinics. All of these improvements are part of his focused goal of making access to care at Madigan a top priority for the various units located on Fort Lewis and the surrounding communities. "I just took command of one of the Army Medical Department's most prestigious medical centers – now that is my definition of hooah," Penner exclaimed. "I'm looking forward to you and your wonderful civilian staff and continue to provide the finest care to our Soldiers, past and the present, their Families to ensure world-class training for our residents, interns and Soldiers, and certainly forward-thinking medical research support to our Army Medical Department."

Penner is a Medical Service Corps officer who deployed to Iraq from 2004-2005 with the 86th Combat Support Hospital. He has served in a multitude of different assignments located throughout Army bases in the United States. He graduated from Murray State University in 1982 with a Bachelor of Science. After serving in the Army Reserves for almost four years, Penner entered active duty. His military education includes the Army Medical Department Officer's Basic and Advance Courses, Command and General Staff College, U.S. Army-Baylor University Master of Health Administration Program and the U.S. Army War College. He has many awards, such as the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, the Expert Field Medical Badge and the Parachutist badge, but he is a Diplomate in the American College of Healthcare Executives, which means he is board-certified and credentialed in executive health care management.

Rubenstein, the chief of the Medical Service Corps, spoke about Penner's value as Madigan's new commander. "Having a reputation for excellence, (Penner) will be committed to the value we all put into getting the mission accomplished to standard," he said.